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RECENT ASSYRO-BABYLONIAN LITERATURE

Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria.

By MORRIS JASTROW, JR., Ph. D., Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of Pennsylvania. With 54 illustrations and a map and chronological lists of the rulers of Babylonia and Assyria. (*American Lectures on the History of Religions*. Ninth Series. 1910.) New York and London: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 1911. pp. 421.

PROFESSOR Jastrow, well-known by his publications on Babylonian-Assyrian religion and mythology, publishes in the present volume, in a series of popular lectures, the results of his investigation carried on for a considerable period. The opinions advanced therein are for the most part not new, and are based on the material contained in his well-known work '*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*.'

In the first lecture, the author surveys the development of Babylonian-Assyrian culture and religion through all periods. In discussing the Sumerian question, he suggests, in a very ingenious way, an intermediate theory between the followers of Halévy and Oppert. We are shown the close relationship between culture and religion in its various aspects—political, social, economic, and artistic—till the advent of the Persians and the introduction of Greek views of the universe.

The second lecture outlines the functions and attributes of the principal Babylonian-Assyrian gods, the development of the pantheon, and the chief factors leading to its formation. Sun, moon, vegetation, storms, and water are the forces with which man is constantly brought into contact. Agriculture and commerce being leading pursuits in the Euphrates valley, it is natural to find the chief deities to be personifications of one or the other of these five forces.

The third lecture describes divination. We have to distinguish between voluntary divination, by seeking out a sign indicative of future events, and involuntary divination, by which a sign indicating the purpose of the gods is forced upon our notice. Two methods of divination overshadow all others: one the inspection of the liver; the other based on the observation of the phenomena of the heavens. It was believed that the god to whom an animal was sacrificed identified himself with the sacrificial animal, the soul of the god becoming identical with the soul of the animal. And since the liver as a bloody organ was regarded as the seat of the soul, a visible means was obtained for studying the soul of the god. Divination of the liver led to a genuine study of the anatomy of the liver. Hence to the Babylonian 'diviners of the livers' belongs the credit of having originated the study of anatomy, just as their associates, the astrologers, laid the elementary foundations of astronomy.

The fourth lecture deals with the second kind of divination, astrology. Its fundamental factor was the identification of the heavenly bodies with the chief gods of the pantheon. It also assumed co-ordination between occurrences on earth and phenomena observed in the heavens. This theory marks an important advance toward recognition of law and order in the universe: each separate deity is no longer an unrestrained law unto itself. Astrology in Babylonia-Assyria concerned itself only with the fortunes of the country and not with the individual and differed from that of the Greeks which concerned itself with the conditions under which a man was born; for the entire spirit of the Greeks was individualistic. Astrology in Babylonia was doomed as soon as it was recognized that whatever happened in the heavens was the result of inexorable law in nature. This decline of astrology gave rise, on the one hand, to astronomy, setting out to find the laws underlying the phenomena of the heavens, on the other hand to Greek astrology; for, according to the belief of pre-ordained fate, both man and planets move in obedience to forces from which there was no escape.

The fifth lecture delineates the idea and organization of the temples and dwells largely on the various cults practised in them.

In the temple proper the 'house' *motif* prevails, the sanctuary being the actual dwelling of the god, and organized in every respect like the court of the king. In the brick towers, known as *zikkurāt*—a term that has the meaning of 'high places'—, the shape and height of which recalls the picture of a mountain, the 'mountain' *motif* prevails. It must have originated with a people dwelling in a mountainous region who placed the seats of their gods on the mountain tops. Hence it was brought to the mountainless region of the Euphrates by a people entering the valley from some mountainous district.

The sixth lecture discusses the ethics of the Babylonians and their views concerning life after death. The former are illustrated by the code of Hammurabi and other documents, the latter by the Gilgamesh epic and the myths of *Adapa*, *Nergal*, and *Ishtar*. In outlining his position on the question of the dependency of the Hebrew religion upon that of the Babylonians, the author contends that, though there is kinship between certain elements of both, its closeness has been exaggerated. Resemblances in myths and traditions are frequently deceptive. And also the form assumed by the biblical traditions presents a noteworthy contrast to the myths and legends of Babylonia and Assyria.

A very valuable addition to the book are the chronological lists, though a great many dates are of ephemeral value. The beautiful illustrations with explanatory notes, facilitating the understanding of the subjects under consideration, add greatly to the merits of the work.

This book, though written in a popular, and even fascinating style, is nevertheless thoroughly scientific, and may be ranked among the prominent works on Babylonian-Assyrian religion which have made their appearance in recent years.

There are a few points in which the reviewer cannot agree with the author. It is hardly fair to say that monotheism in itself is not the outcome of a deep religious spirit. On the one hand, the recognition of law and order in the universe must lead to the assumption that there is only one supreme will in nature. On the other hand, the whole purpose of religion has always been the ethics, and they are based on the idea that a society, subject to one

and the same law, is created by one and the same god, and must therefore lead to monotheism. The Babylonian priests were in all probability quite aware of the importance of these two ideas, and therefore they made the attempt to establish Marduk as the one god under different names, but could not succeed, owing to the rivalry and jealousy of the priests of the other cults.

There was no need to dwell so largely upon the close relationship between temple and palace. It is by no means specifically Babylonian, and it is very doubtful if it was originally Sumerian, considering that the Sumerian terms for 'ruler' such as *lugal*, *en*, *umun*, and even *patesi* contain nothing indicative of a religious function. It seems to have been common Semitic and is best exemplified by the ancient history of Israel in which we see that prophets become *ex-officio* the rulers of the people. Their authority was not a political but a religious prerogative. And it is most likely that the Hebrew term מַלְךְ meant originally 'counsellor' = Assyr. *māliku* from which a denominal verb מִלַּךְ 'to be king' was derived. And also its synonym שָׂר, the derivation of which is doubtful, may have been derived originally from a root שׁוּר = Arabic *shāra*, *'ashāra* 'to show, to advise,' of which there seems to be a trace in הִשְׁרִי (Hosea 8, 4). The ruler was the adviser of the people either by direct communication of a god or by the oracle which only he had the right to consult.

It is improbable that the 'mountain' *motif* of the *zikkurāt* was brought to Babylonia from some mountainous district. Primitive man living in a valley and looking from afar at the awe-inspiring height of the mountains could easily have fancied that they were the seats of the gods and the links between heaven and earth. Desiring to build for the gods a residence such as they were used to, he erected for them mountain-like edifices. An idea like that could never have occurred to a people living on mountains. They must have seen that there was a great distance between heaven and earth. The reviewer, therefore, believes that the idea of the 'high places' as the dwellings of the gods must have originated with people living in a valley.

The author ought to have been more specific in accusing Talmudic Judaism of reinstating customs and rites that were not

specifically Hebrew. A close comparison of the Code of Hammurabi and of the Talmud justifies the assumption that the Oral Law for the most part may claim the same antiquity as the Old Testament. Besides, are all the biblical laws specifically Hebrew?

Das Land ohne Heimkehr. Die Gedanken der Babylonier-Assyrer über Tod und Jenseits nebst Schlussfolgerungen. Von FRIEDRICH DELITSCH. Mit 8 Illustrationen. Erstes his fünftes Tausend. Stuttgart: DEUTSCHE VERLAGS-ANSTALT, 1911. pp. 48.

This booklet describing the Babylonian-Assyrian, biblical, and Mohammedan conceptions of the future life is written with the tendency to impress upon the mind of the Christian reader that the Christian dogma of hell and paradise, the resurrection, the devils, and the fall of man are entirely of Babylonian origin, consequently of no ethical value. Hence they ought to be blotted out, and give way to a more spiritual conception. But if the Christian reader is going to follow the author's advice to eliminate all the doctrines and ideas which originated in Babylonia, where shall be the dividing line? If all these dogmas are to be abandoned, why not give up the doctrine of immortality of the soul? The author's proposed doctrine 'the soul returns to the hands of God' is nothing but a phrase without any meaning, if there are no other dwelling-places for the soul after death. And is it a reason for rejecting religious ideas, that they had their original home in Babylonia?

Die Götternamen in den Babylonischen Siegelcylinder-Legenden. Zusammengestellt und bearbeitet von Dr. JOSEPH KRAUSE. Mit zahlreichen Beiträgen von Prof. Dr. FRITZ HOMMEL. Leipzig: OTTO HARRASOWITZ, 1911. pp. 128.

This book contains legends of a great many Babylonian cylinder seals in transcription, translated and arranged systematically. They belong for the most part to the period of the Hammurabi dynasty. In the introduction, the author outlines the various kinds of legends found on cylinder seals.

Of special value are the notes contributed by Professor Hommel. The legends are of importance for the history of religion

and Babylonian mythology. They confirm the view that the bearer of a name containing the name of a deity was in most cases the worshiper of this deity. Of the highest significance, of course, are the mythological and symbolical representations on the seals which the author promises to publish as a second part. The reviewer would suggest that these seals seem to have been the escutcheons of the possessors, since the names of the owners are frequently left out altogether. Seals of this kind could have been used by members of the respective families for many generations. But it would be going too far to assume with the author that the legends represent expressions of the popular beliefs which differed from those of official Babylonia. The seal cylinders were manufactured by the priests, the representatives of official Babylonia, and in all probability most of the owners were unable to read the legends.

Hammurapi und das Salische Recht. Eine Rechtsvergleichung.

Von HANS FEHR, Professor in Jena. Bonn: MARCUS and E. WEBER'S VERLAG, 1910. pp. 143.

The details of this book are of more interest to the student of German law than to the Assyriologist. The deductions, however, involving the much discussed question concerning the shaping of laws by different nations and how far we are justified in assuming borrowing from each other, are of importance for Assyriology. The author compares the Code of Hammurapi with the *Lex Salica* and shows that they agree in a great many points. And yet the nations which enacted these laws differed in race and language from each other. The conditions under which these laws originated were also quite contrary. How then is their conformity to be explained? The Babylonian Code did not influence the Salic laws through indirect channels. In the main, the latter were even independent of Roman influence. Neither can it be accounted for in the homogeneousness of both the Semitic and German races. They are heterogeneous altogether, as Eduard Meyer has pointed out.

There is only one theory—to assume that the primitive forms of the spiritual and social life are independent of race and nation: the conformity of laws despite non-conformity of race finds its ex-

planation in a general human cause. This theory sounds somewhat mystical, since the author denies that the human mind is in the main formed equally, nor will he admit that there is a common legal consciousness. In his argument, the author seems to have overlooked the quotation of Eduard Meyer (p. 2, note 2) that the laws in the Code of Hammurapi in the main go back to the Sumerians. For if they did not originate with the Semites, how do we know that the Sumerians and the Aryo-Germans were not homogeneous? Accepting the author's conclusions, there would be no justification in asserting the dependency of the biblical legal laws upon the Code of Hammurapi.

Sumerian Hymns and Prayers to god NIN-IB from the Temple Library of Nippur. By HUGO RADAU. "Eckley Brinton Coxe, Junior, Fund." (*The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania*. Series A: Cuneiform Texts edited by H. V. HILPRECHT. Volume XXX, Part I.) Philadelphia: published by the DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, University of Pennsylvania, 1911. pp. 88, plates of autograph texts 15, plates of halftone illustrations 6.

The present volume is a valuable piece of work, full of learned and suggestive annotations, quotations from the Babylonian religious literature and thus greatly contributes both to the reading and interpretation of Sumerian religious texts. The presentation, however, of the Sumerian religion on which the author seems to pride himself especially is not of much account and in a good many points wrong altogether.

The volume is divided into five parts. In the first part the author outlines in several sub-divisions the development of the religion of the Sumerians from the oldest times till the introduction of the god NIN-IB into the Sumerian pantheon. The author undertakes to account for the fact of the Sumerians having ascribed to their god all possible attributes, qualities, and frailties of human nature, even their own social institutions and functions: they felt that, in order to understand their woes and afflictions, *goa must be man*, for only human nature is capable of understanding human nature. But, though thought of as being intensely

human, the Sumerian god is nevertheless most divine on account of the apparent contradictions which the Sumerian mind discovered in the nature of their god, namely, the androgynous nature of the god and his self-existence, for there must be something in the nature of the god which the human mind cannot comprehend and this 'something' is divine, because 'unthinkable.' By transferring to their god everything that belonged originally to man, the microcosm of the Sumerians was the prototype after which the macrocosm of the god was patterned. In the history of the Babylonian religion we find four epochs: (a) the prehistoric or AN epoch, (b) the Sumerian or Enlil epoch, (c) the Amurritish (Canaanitish)-Babylonian or Marduk epoch, (d) the Assyrian epoch with god *An-shar* or Ashshur.

The second part deals with NIN-IB, the 'son' of the Nippur trinity during the Enlil period at the time of the second dynasty of Ur, and contains transcriptions and translations of nine texts with notes. The author holds that though NIN-IB makes his first appearance under Dungi, there are several reasons to assume that he was one of the most ancient Sumerian gods, the cult and very existence of which had been forgotten till it was revived by Dungi who restored the foundation of the temple of NIN-IB.

The tablets are in a very fragmentary condition. One of the most interesting inscriptions is the hymn published under numbers 2-3, which is identical with a Neo-Babylonian copy with a Semitic translation, published in R. H., p. 123,

Hunting for effect is one of the frailties of human nature, hence pardonable in a popular book, magazine, or lecture, but out of place in a volume of this kind that can only be appreciated by scholars. Was the author puzzled to find a solution for the fact of the Sumerian god being endowed with all possible human attributes that he was obliged to take refuge in the Christological idea as the underlying principle in the development of the Sumerian religion and thus making the Sumerian god the prototype of the Founder of Christianity? Why not reverse the process and say that for the Sumerians *man was god*, since it is an undeniable fact that hero-worship played a most important part in the development of religions, and every student of Assyriology knows that in

early Babylonian times all the kings were deified? This explanation would indeed be very reasonable, but not startling and original at all! The Sumerians never ascribed to their gods an androgynous nature. But if a god or a goddess has creative power, to the created being, be it god or man, the god is father-mother. The main support for the theory that Enlil displaced Anum rests on a wrong interpretation in the opening lines of the Code of Hammurabi, since in the same passage is repeated again Anum ú Enlil (col. I, 45), of. also col. XXXXII, 45 f. The fact alone that Enlil is always styled a 'son' shows plainly that Anum never ceased to be considered as the highest god whose commands were executed by Enlil and the other gods. Besides no proof is forthcoming that in the seats of the other gods as Sippar, Larsa, Ur, etc., Enlil was recognized as superior to them. It is hardly likely that the religious conceptions in the Sumerian literature were not more or less influenced by the Semites who were at the time of the Enlil epoch already settled in the country. The pure Sumerian epoch may be more appropriately termed prehistoric.

Sumerian Administrative Documents from the Second Dynasty of Ur. By DAVID H. MYHRMAN. "Eckley Brinton Coxe, Junior, Fund" (*The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania*. Series A: Cuneiform Texts edited by H. V. HILPRECHT. Volume III, Part I.) Philadelphia: published by the DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, University of Pennsylvania, 1910. pp. 146, plates of autographed texts 70, plates of halftone illustrations 12.

The 171 tablets published in this volume are more of epigraphic and lexical than of historical value, as a great many documents belonging to the same period with similar contents have been published in the last twenty years. The cuneiform signs of these tablets are peculiar, there are several new signs, and they contain many terms and variations of terms not known before. But there are also a few new date formulas and variations of date formulas, and since the chronology of the remote period to which these tablets belong is uncertain, and scholars hold extremely divergent opinions in this respect, any new information, adding a link to the

chronological chain, might make it possible to determine with more definite results the dates of this period.

About half of the tablets are dated, and the undated documents have been assigned to this period on the basis of their palæographical characteristics, their proper names, and contents by Prof. Hilprecht. As to the contents, about 120 consist of accounts, receipts, the remainder of contracts, court proceedings, loans, promissory notes, memoranda, purchases, pay-lists, and lists of officials.

The general plan of this volume is according to the principles characteristic of the series of which it forms a part.

A considerable part of the introduction deals with the dates of this period which the author tries to reconstruct with no definite results. As the most useful part in the introduction we consider 'the List of Cuneiform signs' and 'the System of transcription of cuneiform signs' which are a great help to the student not well acquainted with old-Babylonian palæography. But one cannot be too careful in compiling lists of this kind, if they are to serve their purpose as guide to the student. The least omission and inexactitude cause trouble and delay. The 'List' and the 'System' must be consulted simultaneously, and therefore there should be no omission and the signs in both exactly alike. But this is not the case. The signs omitted in the List are: *ág, apin (engar), eburu, gil, gú, késh, mûr, sà, şuḥur, shûb*. The signs in the System which are more or less variants of those in the List are: *asaru, banshur, bár, de, dü, dubbin, gán, gár, gub, gûr, kar, kim, ku(g), lag, mûr, nigín, ri, shu+gí*. If these volumes are to serve as textbooks, more care ought to be taken in compiling lists of signs.

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